GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW AND JUSTICE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4498
ANSWERED ON:06.08.2009
FREE LEGAL AID TO SC AND ST
Kodikunnil Shri Suresh

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to provide free legal aid to the people belonging to the Scheduled Castesand Scheduled Tribes in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the suggestions received from various Government agencies in this regard; and

(d) the time by which the final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

Answer

MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. M. VEERAPPA MOILY)

Parts (a) & (b): Yes, Madam. Free legal aid to all members of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes is being given through the Legal Services Authorities set up under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 (Central Act). The Act has come into force in 1995 and 35 State Legal Services Authorities have been set up in the States and Union Territories. There are 596 District Legal Services Authorities, 2037 Taluk Legal Services Committees.21 High Court Legal Services Committees and a Supreme Court Legal Services Committee to give effect to the provisions of legal services as per the Act. The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) is the apex body giving policy guidelines and Schemes for Legal Services to all the aforesaid legal services institutions in India.

The Legal Services Authorities since their inception have provided free legal services, as on 31st March,2009, to the members of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes as follows:

Number of persons belonging to Scheduled Caste= 13,13,510. Number of persons belonging to Scheduled Tribes = 4,64,503.

Part (c): No suggestions have been received from Government agencies by NALSA.

Part (d): Does not arise.